



A DREAM IN MARBLE

In loving memory of a Wife, although Indian.

THE FAITH OF ISLAM

A SYNOPSIS

“ The desert Arabs say, We believe. Say thou, Ye do by no means believe ; but say ye, We have accepted Islam ; for the faith has not entered into your hearts.”

—Koran, S. xlix. 14.

By MIRZA ABU'L-FAZL.

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To
His Royal Highness
The Duke of Windsor,
Who,
For Conscience' Sake,
Abdicated a Throne
Greater than the Greatest of the Earth,
And stood for the Honour of Womanhood,
When no man would regard it,
This Brochure
Is
Most Humbly and Respectfully
Inscribed
By
His Royal Highness' Most Obedient
Servant,
The Author.

NOTE

THE substance of this paper was originally read at the Calcutta Town Hall before the first Convention of Religions held in 1909. I have since recast the whole. Perhaps it will yet help in bridging the gulf between the two great sister communities that inhabit the soil of India and have hitherto powerfully acted in rending the heart of their Motherland by their inveterate feuds.

Allahabad, *May*, 1925.

ABU'L-FAZL.

Note to the New Edition.

I take this opportunity to revise the whole.

The reference to *Sayings* are to my book, *Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad*, Allahabad, 1924.

For the convenience of European readers I have also corrected the Koranic references according to Dr. Flügel's Leipsic edition.

Hyderabad (Dn.), *March*, 1949.

M.A.-F.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
ISLAM : Its Significance	1
Its Idea of Religion	2
Its Prayer	4
The Idea of Prophetship	6
The Process of Inspiration	8
Its Idea of Brotherhood	9
Its Exhortation to Unity	11
Sectarianism Condemned	11
Exclusiveness Reprobated	12
Its Practical Brotherhood	13
The Code of Islam	15
Responsibility of Man	16
No Atonement or Intercession	17
A Life of Work	17
Faithful Work	20
Earnest Work	20
Mendicancy Condemned	22
Austerities Discountenanced	24
Goodness Inculcated	26
The Duty of Man	29
His Free Agency	30
Some Social Questions	30
Honour of Motherhood	31
Position of Woman	31
Marriage	33

						PAGE
Woman's Share in It	..	..	..	..	..	33
Some More Questions	..	..	..	..	..	35
Polygamy .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	36
Concubinage .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	36
Divorce .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	36
The Zenana System ..	..	..	..	..	..	37
Decorum .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	38
Slavery .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	39
The Prisoners of War	..	..	..	..	..	40
Regard for Life .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	40
Faith Challenges Animal Food	..	..	..	..	..	43
Regard for Human Life	..	..	..	..	..	43
Sacrifices .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	44
Vows .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	46
Just Warfare .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	47
The Rule .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	47
The Interpretation ..	..	..	..	..	..	47
Religious Toleration ..	..	..	..	..	..	48
The Jizya .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	49
Obscurantism Combated	..	..	..	..	..	50
Concluding Remarks	..	..	..	..	..	51

THE FAITH OF ISLAM.

I said, 'What is Islam?' The Prophet said, 'Purity of speech and hospitality.'

I said, 'And what is faith?' He said, 'Patience and beneficence.'

—Amru b. Abasah.¹

A man said, 'O Prophet of God! what is (the mark of) faith?' The Prophet said, 'When thy good work gives thee pleasure, and thy evil work grieves thee, thou art a man of faith.' The man said, 'And what is sin?' The Prophet said, 'When anything smites thee within thyself, forsake it.'

—Abu-Umamah.²

ISLAM : ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

THE root *salama*, from which *Islam* is formed, in the first and fourth conjugations, signifies, in the first instance, to be tranquil, at rest, to have done one's duty, to have paid up, to be at perfect peace, and, finally, to surrender oneself to him with whom peace is made. The noun derived from it means peace, greeting, safety, salvation. "The word," says Deutsch, "thus implies absolute submission to God's will—as generally assumed—neither in the first instance, nor exclusively, but means, on the

¹ *Sayings*, 217.

² *Sayings*, 207.

contrary, striving after righteousness with one's own strength."¹ "Closely connected," continues he, "with the misapprehension of this part of Mohammed's original doctrine is also the popular notion on that supposed bane of Islam, Fatalism; but we must content ourselves here with the observation that, as far as Mohammed and the Koran are concerned, Fatalism is an utter and absolute invention. Not once, but repeatedly, and as if to guard against such an assumption, Mohammed denies it as distinctly as he can, and gives injunctions which show as indisputably as can be, that nothing was further from his mind than that pious state of idle and hopeless inanity and stagnation." Elsewhere the same learned writer says: "It (the Koran) teaches the very contrary doctrine. Mohammed's whole system is one of faith built on hope and fear. Nor did the word Islam originally betoken that absolute and blind submission which it afterwards came to mean, but rather the being at peace and living in accordance with God's words and commands, leading the life of a righteous man; in the sense in which the derivatives of the Semitic Salam occur in early Aramaic."

ITS IDEA OF RELIGION.

Mohammed regarded religion as a straight, natural law for men to follow, wherein was no perplexity or ambiguity; and he even taught that all the children of men would follow the same straight

¹ Cf. Koran, S. lxxii. 14.

way were it not for the corrupting influences of their guardians, who consciously or unconsciously set an unnatural example by their way of life for their little folks to follow.¹ Thus early in Islam, Mohammed did away with the baptismal, and in fact all ceremonies in the hands of a designing priesthood. According to Mohammed, religion was the natural bent of a free, unbiased mind, and man the vicegerent of God on earth in a very real sense,² inspired of his Master to know the good and refuse the evil;³ and only when he refused to follow out the highest and the best and deliberately chose the lower and the worse road did he approximate to the lowest brute.⁴

“Set thou,” says the Koran, “thy face steadfast towards religion as a Hanif (one rightly inclined), the constitution of God whereon He has constituted men; there is no change in the law of God. That is the standard religion, but most men do not know.”⁵

“[That is] the baptism of God, and who is better than God at baptizing? Him we serve.”⁶ “We are of God, and to Him shall we return.”⁷

His religion thus stands forth free of all mysteries and articles of faith on dubious subjects.

¹ Cf. *Sayings*, 463.

² Koran, S. ii. 28.

³ S. xci. 7, 8.

⁴ S. xci. 9, 10; S. xcv. 1-8.

⁵ S. xxx. 29.

⁶ S. ii. 132.

⁷ S. ii. 151.

ITS PRAYER.

Even the prayer of Islam has nothing of the mysterious ritual in it: it is a perfectly intelligible performance. The Moslems gather at a place, no matter if it is an open space or a walled building, line themselves up as in a parade, and listen to the Imam, who only recites appropriate portions for the occasion from the Koran. This congregation is held in a mosque five times daily in the quarters of the city in which they live; once a week on a given day at a larger mosque in the city; twice a year on a festive occasion in the metropolis; and, where possible, once annually at Mecca, where Moslems from all parts of the world congregate on the occasion of the pilgrimage presenting the spectacle of a visible United Church.

“And if thou follow most of those who are in the earth, they will lead thee aside from the way of God: they only follow an opinion, and they only conjecture.”¹

The religion of the former prophets was not a creed-bound dogma but a life of earnest, faithful work: “Do ye say, Verily Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes were Jews or Christians?”²

“Abraham was not a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a Hanif, a Moslem, and he was not of those who joined (others with God).”³

¹ Koran, S. vi. 116.

² S. ii. 134.

³ S. iii. 60.

According to Mohammed, men were originally of one religion (which he named *Islam*), and when differences arose amongst them, God raised up prophets in their midst to guide them with truth, and people only differed among themselves out of mere jealousy.¹

This was the Mother Religion.² In course of time, as the wave of propagation flowed in distant age and clime, and humanity split up into innumerable sections, and scattered throughout the world, to every people,³ in their own tongues,⁴ was conveyed in every age,⁵ this same Divine message of wisdom and of truth,⁶ through an endless succession of prophets and seers.⁷

It will thus be seen that the Islam of Mohammed is not a new religion : its only work lies in restoring the primitive faiths of the prophets and preachers of bygone ages to their original purity and simplicity. And it is not for the Moslem to ignore any of the great teachers who have long since done their work and retired from this world ; he dare not utter a word of disrespect towards them. On the contrary, he is bound to render the greatest deference to each one of them.⁸ Speaking of the prophets of the house of Israel, the Koran says :—

¹ Koran, S. ii. 209.

⁴ S. xiv. 4.

² S. xlii. 11.

⁵ S. xiii. 38.

³ S. x. 48 ; S. xvi. 38 ; S. xxxv. 22.

⁶ S. ii. 146.

⁷ S. xl. 78. 'It is not a fact that Mohammed taught the finality of his own dispensation.

⁸ S. iv. 149-51.

“Say ye, We believe in God, and what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what was given to Moses and Jesus, and what was given to the [other] prophets from their Lord—we make no distinction between any of them: and to Him we submit.”¹

And it is not only to Moses and Jesus and Mohammed that the Moslem owes allegiance, but to *all* the prophets of *all* the nations who have appeared in the different ages of the history of mankind. Thus, along with a thousand others, all the Vedic Rishis of old, and Krishna, Mahavira, and Buddha, of India, Zarathushtra of Persia, and Confucius of China, have alike a place in the hearts of all the followers of Islam.

THE IDEA OF PROPHETSHIP.

The Koranic word generally rendered Prophet is *nabi*, a man with a *naba*, a message, or *rasul*, one sent on a mission. In Islam, the words admit of no supernatural interpretation. I quote from the Koran:

“They said, Has God raised up a man as an apostle?”²

“They said, What an apostle is this? He eats food and walks through the streets! Unless an angel be sent down to him to be a preacher with him, or a

¹ Koran, S. ii. 130; cf. S. iii. 78.

² S. xvii. 96.

treasure be sent down to him, or he have a garden whereof he may eat, (we will not believe)."¹

"Not until angels are sent down to us, or we see our Lord, will we believe."²

"They said, We will by no means believe on thee until thou make a spring (of water) to gush forth for us out of the earth, or there be made for thee a garden of palm trees and vines, and thou make rivers to gush forth in its midst, gushing; or thou make the heaven to fall down upon us (to punish us), as thou dost pretend (it will); or thou bring God and the angels before us, or there be a house of gold for thee; or thou climb up into the heaven; yet will we not believe in thy climbing until thou send down to us a book that we may read."³

Mohammed's reply was as simple as truthful:
"My Lord! was I aught but a mortal apostle?"⁴

"Signs are only with God, and I am only a plain warner."⁵

"I say not to you, With me are the treasures of God, nor that I know the unseen; nor do I say to you, I am an angel; I follow only that which is revealed to me."⁶

"I have no power for myself to profit or to harm, except as God pleases. If I knew the unseen, I should surely have much of good, nor would evil touch me: I am no other than a warner and a bearer of glad tidings to people who believe."⁷

¹ Koran, S. xxv. 8.

⁴ S. xvii. 95.

² S. xxv. 23.

⁵ S. xxix. 49.

³ S. xvii. 92-5.

⁶ S. vi. 50.

⁷ S. vii. 188.

“God sent no apostles before *me* but they ate food and walked through the streets.”¹

“Had angels walked on earth as familiarly, God would surely have sent down to them an angel from heaven as His apostle.”²

“But if God had appointed an angel, He should certainly have made him a man too, and then He would have made perplexing for them what they deem perplexing now.”³

“And even if God were to open above them a gate in the heaven, and all the day long they were climbing into it, they would still say, It is only that our eyes are drunken; nay, we are a people bound by spell.”⁴

“And if God had sent down to *me* a book on paper, and *ye* had touched it with *your* hands, still those who believe not would say, This is only plain magic.”⁵

“I am only a man like yourselves; it is but revealed to me that your God is only one God. Let him then who hopes to meet his Lord, do right and let him not join any one in the worship of his Lord.”⁶

THE PROCESS OF INSPIRATION.

In the Koran the process of all revelation is held to be strictly subjective.⁷

¹ Koran, S. xxv. 22.

⁴ S. xv. 14, 15.

² S. xvii. 97.

⁵ S. vi. 7.

³ S. vi. 9.

⁶ S. xviii. 110.

⁷ Cf. the story of Abraham in S. vi. 75-9.

In meeting the reflections of Mohammed's contemporaries, the Koran says: "Just consider each verse as it occurs, your companion (Mohammed) errs not, nor is he led astray, nor speaks he out of lust: it is only a revelation revealed. One Mighty in power endowed with wisdom taught it him; for he had attained perfection, and was now in the highest horizon; then he came closer and closer, so that he became (as though he were) one single grip of the two bows (of the archers), or closer still. Then He revealed to His servant what He revealed."¹

Elsewhere this plain speech is garbed in metaphor drawn from the older systems, which regarded the angels as a medium of revelation: "Gabriel has revealed it upon thy (Mohammed's) *heart* by the permission of God."² The word I have italicised pointing at the same time to a purely spiritual, subjective process. The reader will not have failed to observe the identity of Gabriel (of S. ii. 97) and One Mighty in power (of S. liii. 5).

Thus, while the Spirit which moved Mohammed was of God, the whole Koran is said to be "the speech of an honourable apostle (Mohammed)."³

ITS IDEA OF BROTHERHOOD.

In Islam, all humanity is one vast brotherhood, with God as their Creator and Master Who looks upon them all as equal: All the barriers, racial and other,

¹ Koran, S. liii. 1-10.

² S. ii. 91.

³ S. lxix. 40; S. lxxxi. 19.

raised against it by the self-interest of man are destroyed, and divisions on the ground of religion merely are not recognized; its teachings being directly opposed to all sectarianism and based on the broadest principle.

“Ye people!” such was the Divine message which Mohammed brought to his people, “verily We have created you of a male and a female, and have made you races and tribes, that ye might know one another; but verily the most honourable of you in the sight of God is he who fears most to do wrong.”¹

“God looked towards the people of this earth: the Arabs hated the non-Arabs, except the best among them of the People of the Book. He says, I have only raised thee up that I may prove thee, and prove [others] by thee.”²

“Man is only a pious believer or a wicked sinner.”³

“Be ye all worshippers of God and brothers to one another, like as God has commanded you.”⁴

“He who has with him an excess of carrying animals, let him give it to him who has none; and he who has an excess of provision, let him give it to him who has it not. The Prophet also made mention of several other things, so that we saw that none of us had any right to have anything in excess.”⁵

¹ Koran, S. xlix, 13.

³ *Sayings*, 792.

² *Sayings*, 464.

⁴ *Sayings*, 904.

⁵ *Sayings*, 195.

"All land is the land of God, and the creatures ~~are~~ all the creatures of God ; whoso quickens a dead land he is the best entitled to have it :"¹ "There is no right of expropriation against him."²

"Whoso cultivates and inhabits a land which is nobody's, shall have the best right to it."³

ITS EXHORTATION TO UNITY.

And an appeal for reconciliation and co-operation in the matter of truth is thus made :

"Say thou, Will ye dispute with us concerning God, when He is our Lord and your Lord, and we have our works, and ye have your works, and we are solely His ?"⁴

"Say thou, O ye people of the Book ! come to an equitable word between us and you—that we will not serve any except God, nor join anything with Him, nor take each other for lords beside God."⁵

"O ye people of the Book ! be not extravagant in your religion, nor say of God [any other] than the truth."⁶

SECTARIANISM CONDEMNED.

"And, verily, this your people is one people and I am your Lord : so fear Me.

¹ *Sayings*, 438.

² *Sayings*, 439.

³ *Sayings*, 441.

⁴ *Koran*, S. ii. 133.

⁵ S. iii. 57.

⁶ S. iv. 169.

"But they have cut up their religion, among themselves, into books, each party rejoicing in what is with them."¹

"Thus has God made fair-seeming to every people their work."²

"Verily, those who divide their religion and become sectaries, have thou nothing to do with them—their affair is only with God: and He will inform them of what they have done."³ "They say, Nay! we'll follow whereon we found our fathers. What! and though their fathers had no sense at all, nor were they guided aright?"⁴

"They say, None shall enter paradise except such as are Jews or Christians. That is their fancy. Say thou, Bring your proofs, if ye speak the truth. Nay! whoso submits himself to God and is a doer of good, he shall have his reward with his Lord: there shall come no fear on them, nor shall they grieve."⁵

EXCLUSIVENESS REPROBATED.

Speaking of the overbearing conduct of some people towards the gentiles, Mohammed thus taught: "They say, There is no obligation upon us in respect to the gentiles: but they utter a lie against God knowingly. . . . These shall have no portion in the hereafter, nor shall God speak to them, nor shall He look upon them on the day of

¹ Koran, S. xxiii, 54, 55.

³ S. vi. 160, Cf. S. xxx. 31.

² S. vi. 108.

⁴ S. ii. 165.

⁵ S. ii. 105, 106.

resurrection, nor shall He purify them, but for them shall be a painful torment."¹

And when they justified themselves by their Law, Mohammed said: "And verily there is a party of them who torture the book with their tongues, that ye may take it to be from the book; but it is not from the book. And they say, It is from God; but it is not from God; and they tell a lie against God knowingly."²

ITS PRACTICAL BROTHERHOOD.

Thus, to a Moslem this wide world presents a vast field for co-operation in the struggle of life towards its ultimate goal. His religion leads him to seek the welfare of humanity in the co-operative spirit, as it were, rather than in the competitive. He might have no objection in treating with a non-Moslem, for religion is no barrier to him, unless he is checked by the peculiar caste rules of the people he is desirous to approach.

The Prophet would stand up when a bier was passing, although it were the bier of a Jew or Jewess.³ Ali, his cousin and son-in-law, when Caliph, bore on his shoulders the coffin of a Christian. Mohammed even offered funeral services for the good and pious Christian Negus of Abyssinia when he heard of his death, in grateful recognition of his kind treatment of Moslems who had fled to his country for refuge from the persecution of the Meccans.⁴

¹ Koran, S. iii. 69-71.

² S. iii. 72.

³ *Sayings*, 79, 80.

⁴ *Sayings*, 750.

The Moslem may with a quiet conscience eat and even intermarry with them all. Mohammed himself, strictly opposed as he was to the religion of the idolaters, had married three of his own daughters (Zeinab, Rukeiyah, and Umm Kulthum) to them, though in early stormy days of Islam it proved disastrous. His daughters were ill-treated and finally turned out by their unbelieving husbands, who also joined the people in persecuting Mohammed and his followers. When six years later, one of them, Abul-As, came over to Mohammed he allowed his daughter to be united to him under the previous marriage—no fresh ceremony or dowry being required.¹ Some other idolaters had also Moslem wives (*e.g.*, Safwan and Ikramah), and their marriages were as plainly recognized by Mohammed as those of Moslems having idolatress-wives (*e.g.*, Ibn Sufyan and Hakim). I need hardly mention that the marriages of Moslems with Jews and Christians and all who believe in God and His moral Government form a part of the Mohammedan Common Law.

This was the practical brotherhood of man that knew no colour, no creed, and which bade men meet on the common platform of humanity, and humanity alone.

Islam offers no violence to natural relations in life. The Koran says: “*God* has enjoined upon man concerning his parents;—his mother bears him with weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two

¹ Ibn Abbas, in *Abu Daud* and *Tirmidhi*.

years ;—Be thankful to God and to thy parents. . . . But if they strive with thee that thou shouldst join with Him what thou hast no knowledge of, then obey them not, but associate with them in this world with kindness.”¹

“*God made man to maintain relationship.*”²

Upon one occasion, when engaged in a battle with his opponents, Mohammed saw a son (his follower) actually springing upon his unbelieving father with a drawn sword, Mohammed stood between them and pushed the son aside, thus saving the father's life.

All wrangling upon religion was absolutely shut out :—

“The Jews say, The Christians stand on nothing ; and the Christians say, The Jews stand on nothing. Yet they read the book. Thus say those who are gentiles like as these say. But God shall judge between them on the day of resurrection concerning that whereon they dispute.”³ “They say, Be ye Jews or Christians, that ye may be guided aright. Say thou, Nay ! but the creed of Abraham, the Hanif, who was not of those who joined [other gods with God].”⁴

THE CODE OF ISLAM.

And the Code of Islam is thus given :—

“Come,” says the Koran, “I'll tell you what your Lord has enjoined upon you—that ye join not

¹ Koran, S. xxxi. 13, 14.

³ S. ii. 107.

² S. xcvi. 2.

⁴ S. ii. 129.

anything with Him ; and be good to parents, . . .
 and draw not nigh to filthy actions—to what appears
 thereof and to what is hidden ; and kill not a life
 which God has made sacred unless for justice. . . .
 And give full measure and a just balance. . . .
 And when ye speak be just, although it be [against]
 one who is of kin : and the command of God fulfil ye.
 That is what He enjoins you, that ye may be mindful.
 And this is my straight way ; so follow it.”¹

This was the life according to the Original Religion,
 and whoso broke from it was regarded as “going
 astray.” In the Koran such people are called an
 “unjust people” and “transgressors.” “But those
 who do wrong follow their lusts without knowledge.”²

RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN.

“A man shall be asked about five things on the day
 of resurrection : concerning his life, how he spent it ;
 concerning his youth, how (he spent it and) grew old ;
 concerning his wealth, how he acquired it, and how he
 spent it ; and what was it that he did with the knowledge
 that he has acquired.”³

“Will *God* treat those who believe and do the
 right like those who do evil in the earth ? or will
 He treat the pious like the wicked ?”⁴ “God’s is
 what is in the heavens and what is in the earth, that He
 may reward those who do evil with what they do,
 and may reward those who do good with good.”⁵

¹ Koran, S. vi. 152-54.

² S. xxx. 28 ; Cf. S. xlv. 22.

³ *Sayings*, 812.

⁴ S. xxxviii. 27.

⁵ S. liii. 32.

“Let them alone who take their religion for a play and a sport, and whom the life of this world has deceived : and remind them hereby that a soul shall become liable for what it has earned [of good or evil] : it shall have no patron or intercessor beside God : and if it could atone with the fullest atonement, it would not be accepted from it.”¹

NO ATONEMENT OR INTERCESSION.

“Whoso is guided aright,” the Koran says, “is guided aright only for his own self, and whoso errs, errs only against the same ; and no burdened soul shall bear the burden of another.”²

“And fear the day when no soul shall make satisfaction for another soul, nor shall intercession be accepted from it, nor shall atonement be received from it, nor shall they be helped.”³

A LIFE OF WORK.

Islam, above all, is a religion of works. The service of man and the good of humanity constitute pre-eminently the service and worship of God.

“All creation is the family of God, and of all creation the most beloved of God is he who does most good to His family.”⁴

“God will not be merciful to him who is not merciful to men ”⁵ “The Merciful God is merciful

¹ Koran, S.vi. 69.

² S. xvii. 16. Cf. S. xxxv. 19 ; S. vi. 164 ; S. xxxix. 9.

³ S. ii. 45. ⁴ *Sayings*, 269. ⁵ *Sayings*, 511.

to those who are merciful: be ye then merciful to those who are in the earth, so that He Who is in the heaven may be merciful to you.”¹ “God is always ready to help His worshippers so long as the worshipper is ready to help his brother.”²

A selfless life of love is the life of a Moslem. Being asked as to the best part of faith, Mohammed said, “That thou love for the sake of God, and hate for the sake of God, and that thou love for men what thou lovest for thyself, and hate for them what thou hatest for thyself.”³

“Ye shall not believe unless ye love one another.”⁴

“He has no faith who fulfils not his trust, and he has no religion who fulfils not his promise.”⁵

“By Him in Whose hand my life is! no worshipper [truly] believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.”⁶

“God has made man unto heartache and toil.”⁷

“Has not God made man two eyes and a tongue and two lips, and pointed him out the two highways [of good and evil]?”

“Yet he attempts not the steep one! And what shall make thee know what that steep one is?—To

¹ *Sayings*, 508.

² *Sayings*, 1017.

³ *Sayings*, 208.

⁴ *Sayings*, 194.

⁵ *Sayings*, 215.

⁶ *Sayings*, 214.

⁷ Koran, S. xc. 4.

free a neck [from the tyrant's yoke or unjust burden], or to feed on the day of famine the orphan who is of kin, or the poor that lies in the dust ; then, to be of those who believe [in God], and enjoin steadfastness on each other and enjoin compassion on each other.—These are the blessed people.”¹

The essence of religion is declared to be the service of afflicted humanity :

“ Hast thou seen him who calls the religion a lie ? That is [the man] who pushes away the orphan, and stirs not up [others] to feed the poor.”²

And the following is conveyed to a heartless worshipper :

“ And woe to those who pray, who of their prayers (or, duties), are unmindful, who make a show, and refuse the meanest help [to the needy].”³

Work, and work alone, is the true test of a believer in the sight of God :

“ Verily, those who say, Our Lord is God, and then keep straight on, there shall come no fear on them, nor shall they grieve ; — these are the people of paradise, to dwell therein for ever, as a reward for what they have done.”⁴

“ Verily, those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabæans—whoso believes in God and the last day, and does right—

¹ Koran, S. xc. 4, 8-18.

³ S. cvii. 4-7.

² S. cvii. 1-3.

⁴ S. xlvi, 12, 13 ; S. xli. 30-32.

they shall have their reward with their Lord, there shall come no fear on them, nor shall they grieve."¹

FAITHFUL WORK.

Addressing a larger humanity, Mohammed thus appealed to them to sink their petty differences: "For every people has God appointed rites [and ceremonies] which they observe: let them not, therefore, dispute with thee in the matter,"² "To every one of you has God given a law and an open way—and if He had pleased, He would surely have made you one people, but [He has done otherwise], that He might try you in what He has given you [respectively]. Strive then to excel each other in good works: to God is your return altogether, and then will He tell you of that concerning which ye disagree."³

EARNEST WORK.

The life of the believer, in Islam, is a severe trial "Do men imagine that they will be left alone to say, We believe, and not be tried?"⁴ "Verily God has bought of the faithful their souls and their wealth."⁵

"Do ye make the repairing to the sacred Mosque (of Mecca for a pilgrimage) to be like (the work of) him who believes in God and the hereafter, and strives in the way of God?—They are not equal in the sight of God."⁶

"It is no good that ye turn your faces (in prayer) towards the east or the west; but goodness is of him

¹ Koran, S. ii. 59; v. 73.

² S. xxii. 66.

³ S. v. 52, 53.

⁴ S. xxix. 1.

⁵ S. ix. 112.

⁶ S. ix. 10.

who believes in God and the last day, and the angels, and the book, and the prophets, and who gives wealth, his love of it notwithstanding, to those who are of kin and to orphans and the poor and the homeless, and those who ask, and to free a neck [from the tyrant's yoke], and who is steadfast in prayer, and gives alms, and of those who fulfil their covenant when they have covenanted, and those who persevere patiently in adversity and hardships and in times of violence;—these are they who are true, and these are the pious.”¹

“Ye shall never attain to goodness until ye spend [for others] what ye love [to possess] yourselves.”²

Islamic charity, which embraces the widest circle of kindness, is exacting in the minutest concerns of life. “Every good act,” Mohammed would say, “is charity.”³ “Thy smiling in thy brother's face is charity; thy bidding what is good is charity; thy forbidding what is wrong is charity; thy putting a man in an unknown land in the right road is charity for thee; thy assisting a man who has a defect in the eye is charity for thee; thy removing stones and thorns and bones from the road is charity for thee; and thy emptying the bucket into the bucket of thy brother is charity for thee.”⁴ “Despise not anything good, and speak to thy brother with an open countenance; verily, that is of good acts and kindnesses.”⁵

¹ Koran, S. ii. 172.

² S. iii. 86.

³ *Sayings*, 87.

⁴ *Sayings*, 88.

⁵ *Sayings*, 10.

"The believer dies," said Mohammed, "with his sweat on the brow."¹ "He is not a believer who eats his fill while his neighbour lies hungry by his side."² "The world is a prison for the believer, and a paradise for the unbeliever."³

Moslem Paradise is declared to be "beneath the shade of swords."⁴ "Hell-fire," said Mohammed, "is veiled by passions, and paradise is veiled by hardships."⁵

MENDICANCY CONDEMNED.

"A man of the Ansars came to the Prophet begging of him. The Prophet said, Hast thou nothing in thy house? He said, Yes, I have a woollen carpet, with one part of which we cover ourselves and spread the other, and a cup in which we drink water. The Prophet said, Come to me with them both. The man came to him with both, and the Prophet took them in his hand, and said, Who will buy these two? A man said, I will take them both for one dirham. The Prophet said, Who will give more than one dirham? This he repeated twice or thrice. Another man said, I will take them both for two dirhams. Then the Prophet gave them both to that man, and took the two dirhams, and gave them to the man, and said, Buy food with one of these, and let it go to thy family, and buy a hatchet with the other, and come to me with it. The man came to the Prophet with it. The Prophet

¹ *Sayings*, 613.

² *Sayings*, 614.

³ *Sayings*, 615.

⁴ *Sayings*, 905.

⁵ *Sayings*, 322.

fixed a handle to it with his own hands, and then gave it to the man, saying, Go, cut wood, and sell it, and let me not see thee for fifteen days. The man did as he was bidden. Then he came to the Prophet when he had already got ten dirhams; and he had bought a garment with part of it, and food with part. Then the Prophet said, "This is better for thee than that thou shouldst come on the day of Judgment with black marks of disgrace upon thy face."¹

Some of the Prophet's sayings on the subjects are: "If ye knew what is in begging, none of you would go to another begging anything."²

The Prophet enjoined upon us, saying, "Ask not anything of men, although it be thy scourge: if it has fallen from thee, get down to it, and take it."³

"That one of you take his rope and go to the mountain and bring a bundle of wood upon his back and sell it, is better for him than that he should beg of men, whether they give him or not."⁴

"O Qabisah, verily, begging is not lawful for any but one of the three men; namely, a man who has undertaken the burden of another which he can no longer bear; he may ask men to help him, until he has got sufficiency; after that let him withhold himself; a man whom a misfortune has befallen and who comes to want; he may ask the help of men until he is settled in life; and a man who is oppressed by hunger, so that

¹ *Sayings*, 64.

³ *Sayings*, 66.

² *Sayings*, 65.

⁴ *Sayings*, 70.

three intelligent men out of his people may say that such and such a one is oppressed by starvation, until he is settled in life. None besides these may beg, O Qabisah. The beggar eats unlawfully.”¹

“Begging is a scratch or wound by which a man wounds his own face.”²

“Verily, begging is not lawful for the rich, nor for the strong in body, and those in good condition; . . . and whoso begs of men to increase his wealth thereby, it shall be scratches and wounds on his face.”³

“The upper hand that bestows is better than the lower hand that begs.”⁴

“Verily the best thing is what ye eat of your own earning.”⁵

“Never has any one eaten a better thing than what he eats of the work of his hand.”⁶

“He who seeks the world in a lawful manner in order to abstain from begging, and to strive for (the maintenance of) his people, and for the love of his neighbour, shall meet God, his face shining like the moon of the full-moon night.”⁷

AUSTERITIES DISCOURTENANCED.

While enjoining fasting, Mohammed discountenanced all austerities in life.

¹ *Sayings*, 72.

² *Sayings*, 71.

³ *Sayings*, 67.

⁴ *Sayings*, 68.

⁵ *Sayings*, 436.

⁶ *Sayings*, 437.

⁷ *Sayings*, 1064.

“God desires for you what is easy, and desires not for you what is difficult.”¹

“Verily, this your religion is easy, and none shall be severe in religion but it will overcome him: he shall turn it into a stone and make it his tomb.”²

“O ye apostles! enjoy the good things (of this life), and act aright; verily, I know well what ye do.”³

. . . “And WE followed (them) up with Jesus the son of Mary, and WE gave him the Evangel, and WE put into the hearts of those who followed him kindness and compassion: but monasticism, they invented it themselves—WE did not prescribe it to them; [WE prescribed] only the seeking the good-will of God: yet they observed it not with its due observance; but WE gave to those of them who believed their reward.”⁴

“The Prophet said, O Abdullah, I am told that thou dost fast all day and standest up to pray all night long. Do not do like that. Keep fast and eat also, and stand up to pray at night and sleep also; for verily there is a duty on thee to thy body, and verily there is a duty on thee to thine eyes, and verily there is a duty on thee to thy people, and verily there is a duty on thee to thy visitors; and nobody has kept fast who fasted always; a fast of three days in every month is equal to constant fasting; so fast three days in every month.”⁵

¹ Koran, S. ii. 181.

³ Koran, S. xxiii. 53.

² *Sayings*, 9.

⁴ S. lvii. 27.

⁵ *Sayings*, 219.

“ Shall I tell you of something more excellent in degree than fasting and almsgiving and prayer? It is to improve concord (among men).”¹

“ How many men fast who have nothing of fasting but thirst, and how many men stand up to pray at night who have nothing of prayer except keeping awake ! ”²

“ He who strives for the well-being of poor widows and the poor, is like him who strives in the cause of God, or like him who fasts all day and stands up to pray all night.”³

“ He is not of us who castrates or is castrated ; verily, the castration of my people is to fast, and the monasticism of my people is to sit in places of worship waiting for prayers.”⁴

GOODNESS INCULCATED.

“ Mohammed kissed certain children, whereupon an Arab of the desert who was present, said, What ! dost thou kiss children, while we do not ? ”⁵

“ Aqra b. Habis said, I have ten children, and yet I have never kissed any one of them. The prophet looked towards him, and said, Have I the power to put into thee tenderness if God has deprived thee of it ? ”⁶

“ There is no good in much of what they talk in private, unless [in the talk] of him who bids charity, or what is reasonable, or concord among men.”⁷

¹ *Sayings*, 116.

² *Sayings*, 220.

³ *Sayings*, 720.

⁴ *Sayings*, 745.

⁵ *Sayings*, 518.

⁶ *Sayings*, 514.

⁷ Koran, S. iv. 114.

“ Assist one another in goodness and piety, but assist not one another in sin and enmity ; and fear God ; verily, God is severe in punishing.”¹

“ And let not the malice of a people provoke you to transgress, but act justly,—it will be nearer to piety ; and fear God ; verily God is informed of what ye do.”²

“ The most hateful to me among you is the garrulous, and those who talk glibly, and those who talk tall.”³

“ Withhold thyself from using the tongue (wrongfully), for what else throws men into the fire, upon their faces, and upon their noses, but the harvests of their tongue ? ”⁴

“ All speech of the son of man is a crime against him, except the bidding of what is good, and the forbidding of what is wrong, or the remembrance of God.”⁵

“ Verily in the body there is a piece of flesh : when it is in good condition, the whole body is in good condition ; and when it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt : it is the heart.”⁶

“ The adultery of the eye is looking (lustfully), the adultery of the ear is hearing (what is wrong), the adultery of the tongue is speaking (what is wrong)

¹ Koran, S. v. 2.

² S. v. 8.

³ *Sayings*, 177.

⁴ *Sayings*, 832.

⁵ *Sayings*, 910.

⁶ *Sayings*, 320.

the adultery of the hands is seizing (wrongfully), the adultery of the feet is walking (with unlawful intents), and the heart lusts and desires, and the private parts (of men) do either confirm or nullify."¹

"And pursue not that whereof thou hast no knowledge; verily, the hearing, and the sight, and the heart, each of these shall be examined."²

"Evil is the name wickedness after faith."³

"Verily, God looks not to your figures, nor to your bodies, but He looks into your hearts and to your works of piety. Then pointing to his breast, the Prophet said, Herein lies piety."⁴

"The best beloved of me among you is he who is the best in manners among you."⁵

"Let none of you make another who is sitting stand, to sit in his place; but make room for all."⁶

"When there are three men, let not two engage in a private conversation without the third, for that may grieve him."⁷

Mohammed also laid great stress on personal cleanliness. In insisting on ablutions before prayer, he plainly gave out :

"God desires not to put a difficulty upon you, but He desires to make you clean."⁸

¹ *Sayings*, 18.

² Koran, S. xvii. 36.

³ S. xlix. 11.

⁴ *Sayings*, 704.

⁵ *Sayings*, 465.

⁶ *Sayings*, 470.

⁷ *Sayings*, 471.

⁸ Koran, S. v. 9.

“A man came to the Prophet with his hair and beard in a disordered state. The Prophet pointed to his hair as if to bid him put it in order. He did as he was bidden, and then came to the Prophet. The Prophet said, Is not this better than that one of you should come with dishevelled hair as though he were a satan ?”¹

“At another time he saw a man who had on his person a dirty clothing, and said, What ! does not this man find water to wash his clothes therewith ?”²

“He who has hair, let him do it justice.”³

THE DUTY OF MAN.

And what is the duty of man in Islam ?—

“Verily,” says the Koran, “God commands justice and the doing of good, and the giving to those of kin [their due] ; and He forbids filthy actions and iniquity and transgression.”⁴

“When one of you sees wrong-doing,” said Mohammed, “let him undo it with his hand ; and if he cannot do this, then let him speak against it with his tongue ; and if he cannot do this either, then let him abhor it with his heart—and this is the least of faith.”⁵

“By Him in Whose hand stands my life ! bid what is reasonable, and forbid what is wrong, or He will

¹ *Sayings*, 163.

³ *Sayings*, 162.

² *Sayings*, 164.

⁴ Koran, S. xvi. 90.

⁵ *Sayings*, 235.

certainly send against you a chastisement from Him: then will ye call on Him, and He will not answer you.”¹

HIS FREE AGENCY.

The free agency of man is throughout maintained: “When they commit a filthy action, they say, We found our fathers at it, and God bids us do it. Say thou, God bids [you] not to commit filthy actions. Will ye say of God what ye do not know?”²

“Say thou, My Lord has only forbidden filthy actions—what appears thereof, and what is hidden—and sin and transgression without right, and that ye join with God what He has sent down no authority for, and that ye should say of God what ye do not know.”³

“Verily, God changes not [His grace] which is in men until they change what is in themselves [by transgression].”⁴

SOME SOCIAL QUESTIONS.

Having said something of the general tenour of the reforms effected by Islam in the domain of creeds, sects, and nations, of beliefs many and practices varied, I next come to take a very cursory view of some of the social reforms effected by Islam, beginning with the subject of woman, her position, etc., from the Islamic standpoint.

HONOUR OF MOTHERHOOD.

“Honour motherhood,” is one of the first lessons of Islam. The Koran says: “Ye people! fear your Lord Who created you of the same species, and created

¹ *Sayings*, 238.

² Koran, S. vii. 28.

³ S. vii. 33.

⁴ S. xiii. 11.

thereof its mate, and from them two has spread abroad so many men and women. And fear God by Whom ye beg of one another, and honour motherhood (*lit.*, wombs). Verily God watches over you.”¹

“God has revealed to woman, saying, I am full of the attributes of motherly love, and thou art the mother: I have derived thy name from My name. Whoso then shall join with thee in affection, I shall join with him in affection, and whoso shall cut asunder the ties which bind him to thee, I will cut asunder My ties from him.”

“Verily, motherhood has comprehended all relations of the Motherly-loving God.”

“Verily, motherhood is a ramification of the Motherly-loving God.”

“Heaven lies at the foot of the Mother.”

POSITION OF WOMAN.

Of all the great teachers of the world, Mohammed alone stands forth as the lover of womankind and is not ashamed of confessing to his innate love for the delicate sex whom he frequently called “Glass,”² as most susceptible to the least shock of mind and body. “By no means is a man like a woman,”³ it was said to the mother of Mary, when she complained to God of the birth of a female child in preference to a male.

“Women are made instinctively beloved to me,” Mohammed frankly avowed.

¹ Koran, S. iv. 1.

² Sayings, 1056.

³ Koran, S. iii. 31.

Mohammed called woman, "the most inestimable thing in the world," "the handiwork of God," "the mother of men."

"When one of them is given the glad tidings of (the birth of) a female child, his face becomes overshadowed and black, and he is sorely distressed: he skulks away from the people, because of the evil of the glad tidings given him: should he keep it with disgrace, or bury it in the dust? Is it not evil that they judge?"¹

"Whenever the Prophet saw Fatima (his youngest daughter), he would welcome her, and rising from his seat would kiss her, and then taking her by the hand would seat her in his own seat."²

"Whoso has a female child, and does not bury her alive, nor holds her in contempt, nor prefers his male child above her, God will make him enter into paradise."³

She is by no means any inferior in her social life. "Men are but attendants upon women," says the Koran.⁴

Her married life is one of the pleasantest in Islam. "Your wives are a garment to you, and ye are a garment to them."⁵ "They have rights [against men] like as [men] have [rights] against them, in reason."⁶ "Men shall have a portion of what [their] parents and kindred leave, and women [also] shall have a portion of what [their] parents and kindred leave, whether it be little or much; a set portion is theirs."⁷ "Men shall have a portion of what they earn, and women also a portion of what they earn."⁸

¹ Koran, S. xvi. 60, 61.

² *Sayings*, 224.

³ *Sayings*, 224.

⁴ Koran, S. iv. 38.

⁵ S. ii. 183.

⁶ S. ii. 228.

⁷ S. iv. 8.

⁸ S. iv. 36.

MARRIAGE.

Marriage, according to the Mohammedan law, is not simply a civil contract, not a social partnership merely, neither an alliance for convenience to be dissolved at pleasure. It is an institution of God whose foundations are laid and principles fixed and enduring as the human race itself. It is a sacred, "strict bond of union,"¹ with the object "that ye may confide in them (wives), and that there may be love and tenderness between you."²

Some of Mohammed's sayings with regard to marriage might be quoted with advantage: "Thou wilt see nothing more conducive of love like marriage."³ "Matrimonial alliances between families and peoples increase love more than anything else." "When a worshipper [of God] marries, he perfects half his religion."⁴ "Marry those whom you will love and who will love you." "When any of you marry let them meet each other first."⁵ "No marriage can take place without the express will of the woman." "If she consent not, she cannot be married."⁶

WOMAN'S SHARE IN IT.

Perfect liberty is allowed to a woman who has reached the age of puberty, to marry or refuse to marry a particular man, independent of her guardian, who has no power to dispose of her in marriage without

¹ Koran, S. iv. 25. Rev. J.M. Rodwell's translation.

² S. xxx. 20.

⁴ Sayings, 475.

³ Sayings, 473.

⁵ Sayings, 484-6.

⁶ Sayings, 479-83.

her consent or against her will ; while the objection is reserved for the girl married by her guardian during her infancy to ratify or dissolve the contract immediately on reaching her majority.

“ A virgin girl complained to the Prophet that her father had married her while she was averse to it ; whereupon the Prophet gave her her option (either to ratify or dissolve the marriage).”¹

“ A young woman complained to the Prophet, saying, My father has married me to the son of his brother that he may rise above his poverty through me. The Prophet sent for her father, who being come, the Prophet gave her her option ; whereupon she said, O Prophet of God, I allow what my father has done, but I desired that I should let other women know that a father has nothing to bid (in the matter of a young woman’s marriage).”²

Among the conditions which are requisite for the validity of a contract of marriage are understanding, puberty, and freedom in the contracting parties. A person who is an infant in the eye of the Law is disqualified from entering into any legal transaction, and is consequently incompetent to contract a marriage. A marriage contracted by a minor who has not arrived at the age of discretion, or who does not possess understanding, or who cannot comprehend the consequences of the act, is a mere nullity.

¹ *Sayings*, 482.

² *Sayings*, 483.

In Islam, the capacity of a woman, adult and sane, to contract herself in marriage is absolute; she requires no guardian, though to supplement a presumed incapacity of the woman, to understand the nature of the contract, to settle the terms and other matters of a similar import, and to guard the girl from being victimized by an unscrupulous adventurer, or from marrying a person morally or socially unfitted for her, a guardian is generally recommended, such as a mother, an elder sister, or a male member of the family competent enough to act as such. In Law, the woman is mistress of her own actions. She is not only entitled to consult her own interests in matrimony, but can appoint whomsoever she chooses to represent her and protect her legitimate interests. Under the law, the guardian acts as an attorney on behalf of the woman deriving all his powers from her and acting solely for her benefit.¹

SOME MORE QUESTIONS.

While on this subject, I may be allowed to notice the teaching of Islam on polygamy, concubinage, divorce, and the system of female seclusion.

I may briefly mention that none of these is included in Islam.

Islam, wherever it found difficulty in the matter of existing society which it could ill afford to ignore,

¹ Abridged from Justice Ameer Ali's *Personal Law of the Mahommedans*, in loco.

quietly laid down rules, so that when the time was ripe for it, they might from within work out its abolition.

POLYGAMY.

On polygamy, the Koran says :—

“Ye may marry of such women as are lawful for you by twos and threes and fours : but if ye fear ye cannot act equitably, [and ye can never act equitably between women although ye fain would do it,¹ and God has not made a man two hearts within him,²] then one only, or what ye have already acquired (under the existing social conventions) ;—that is more proper, that ye be not partial.”³

CONCUBINAGE.

Concubinage is distinctly prohibited throughout the Koran.⁴

DIVORCE.

Divorce has been strongly denounced by Mohammed as “the most displeasing of men’s actions in the sight of God.”⁵ The Koran frequently refers such matters to arbitration for reconciliation,⁶ and thus exhorts them to re-unite : “And if ye hate them,

¹ Koran, S. iv. 128.

² S. xxxiii. 4.

³ S. iv. 3. Or, the last part of the sentence may be rendered, “that ye multiply not wives.” (Imam Shafii : *Kisai*.) See my *Garibu’l-Qur’an*, § ‘ala.

⁴ S. xxiv. 32 ; S. iv. 28 ; S. v. 7.

⁵ Cf. *Sayings*, 179-82.

⁶ Koran, S. iv. 39, 127.

it may be that ye hate a thing wherein God has placed much good for you.”¹

In the Mohammedan law, the wife also is entitled to demand a separation on the ground of ill-usage, want of proper maintenance, and various other causes, but unless she showed some good reasons for demanding the separation, she lost her dowry, as when the divorce originated with the husband (except in case of in chastity) he had to give up to her everything he settled upon her in marriage.

THE ZENANA SYSTEM.

Throughout the Koran we have no trace of the Zenana system, by which a woman is entirely withdrawn from the society of men and the freer atmosphere outside her own world of four walls.

In this connexion, it may be interesting to note that in the early days of Islam this was enjoined by Mohammed as a punishment for unfaithful wives :

“And as to those of your women who have come in for filthy action, bring four witnesses against them from among your sex ; and if they bear witness, then keep them in [your] houses until death release them or God make for them a way.”²

This was later converted into “scourging the adulteress and the adulterer with an hundred stripes.”³

¹ Koran, S. iv. 23.

² S. iv. 19.

³ S. xxiv. 2.

DECORUM.

Of course, modesty is a virtue upon which Mohar med laid the greatest emphasis without respect sex: "Speak to the faithful [among] men, that the restrain their eyes, and preserve their modesty that will be more decent for them; verily God informed of what they do.

"And speak to the faithful [among] women, that they restrain their eyes, and preserve their modesty and display not their embellishment, except wha [necessarily] appears thereof; and let them throw their kerchiefs over their bosoms; and let them no display their embellishment, unless to their husbands or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, or their women, or what their right hands have possessed (as slaves), or the male attendants who are not cunning, or children who do not note the nakedness of women. And let them not stamp with their steps so that their embellishment which they hide may be known. And be ye all turned unto God, ye believers, that ye may prosper."¹

"O Prophet! speak to thy wives and to thy daughters and to the women of the faithful, that they let down their wrappers over them [when they walk abroad]; that will be nearer for them to be known, and they will not be affronted."²

¹ Koran, S. xxiv. 30, 31.² S. xxxiii. 59.

SLAVERY.

Regarding slavery, I can only state that Mohammed looked upon the system as altogether inhuman. He said : " Nothing pleases God more than the freeing of slaves." ¹

He would say, " The best of charities is the freeing of a neck from the yoke of thralldom." ²

Some of his regulations in respect of slavery are : Not to call a slave a slave, but a boy or girl. ³ No nearer relation by blood shall be held in slavery. ⁴ A slave-girl giving birth to a child by her master shall be free ; ⁵ no mother shall be separated from her child ; ⁶ no brothers to be separated ; ⁷ a female slave beaten with the hand shall be free ; ⁸ a slave scourged with the scourge shall be free ; ⁹ killing or mutilating a slave shall be retaliated ; ¹⁰ a slave who desires to pay for his manumission must be helped. ¹¹

He enacted a law that slaves should be allowed to purchase their liberty by the wages of their service, and that in case the unfortunate beings had no present means of gain and wanted to earn in some other employment enough for that purpose, they should be allowed to leave their masters on simply making

¹ Cf. *Sayings*, 181 ; Koran, S. xc. 13 ; S. ii. 172 ; etc.

² *Sayings*, 885

⁷ *Sayings*, 892.

³ *Sayings*, 883.

⁸ *Sayings*, 895.

⁴ *Sayings*, 888.

⁹ *Sayings*, 897.

⁵ *Sayings*, 889.

¹⁰ *Sayings*, 898.

⁶ *Sayings*, 890, 891.

¹¹ *Sayings*, 968.

an agreement to that effect.¹ He also provided that sums should be advanced to the slaves from public treasury to purchase their liberty.²

THE PRISONERS OF WAR.

No prisoners of war were to be enslaved, as was hitherto the custom. The Koran has laid down the plain injunction :

“ When ye encounter those who believe not, strike off (their) necks, until ye have vanquished them, and (of the rest) bind fast the bonds ; then either (give them) a free dismissal afterwards, or exact a ransom, until the war shall have laid down its burdens.”³

Nor were the women prisoners to be detained from their wedlock :

“ And retain not the chastity of unbelieving women.”⁴

The whole tenour of Mohammed's teaching made this trade of human lives impossible. I could dwell upon it a little longer, but should pass on to the respect for life taught in Islam.

REGARD FOR LIFE.

Wanton destruction of life is considered reprehensible : “ There is no moving thing in the earth, nor

¹ Koran, S. xxiv. 33.

³ S. xlvii. 4, 5.

² S. ix. 60.

⁴ S. ix. 10.

a bird that flies with his wings, but is a being like to you; . . . to their Lord shall they be gathered.”¹

“Whoso kills a sparrow for nothing, it will cry aloud to God on the day of resurrection, saying, O my Lord! such-and-such a man killed me for nothing; he never killed me for any good.”²

“There is no man who kills a sparrow, or any thing beyond that, without its deserving it, but God will ask him about it.”³

“Take not things which have life to shoot [arrows] at.”⁴

The Prophet forbade any living thing, tied up and bound, to be killed.⁵ He also forbade the setting of brute beasts against one another.⁶ He forbade the striking on the face of an animal and the branding thereon.⁷

Mohammed pardoned and blessed an unfortunate woman for her kindness to a dog that was holding out its tongue from thirst which was near killing it; for she took off her short boot and tied it to her wrapper, and pulled water for it.⁸

He cursed a cruel woman “for her behaviour to a cat, which she had tied up, so that it died of hunger;

¹ Koran, S. vi. 38.

² *Sayings*, 36.

³ *Sayings*, 37.

⁴ *Sayings*, 39.

⁵ *Sayings*, 40.

⁶ *Sayings*, 41.

⁷ *Sayings*, 42.

⁸ *Sayings*, 43, 44.

for she gave it not to eat, nor untied it, so that it could eat insects and reptiles of the earth.”¹

He denounced the heartless acts of men who burned the abode of ants.²

He forbade the robbing of eggs from the nests of birds.³

He forbade the capturing of young birds and distressing the mother-bird, and would have them restored to their nests.⁴ Even the young animals he would restore to their mothers.

The believers are required to look to the minutest details of the comforts of their domestic animals. “Do not cut off the forelock of the horse, for a decency is attached to it; nor its mane; nor its tail, for it is its fly-flap.”⁵

The Prophet would feel sorely distressed at the thought of the least neglect of duty towards his dumb and humble servitors. “The Prophet was seen wiping the face of his horse with his wrapper; and, being questioned, said, At night I have had a reprimand from God in regard to my horse.”⁶

“Take not the backs of your beasts for platforms (to stand on for any length of time).”⁷ “I was riding on a restive camel,” says a wife of the Prophet, “and I turned it roughly; whereupon the Prophet said, Thy duty is to be kind.”⁸

¹ *Sayings*, 45.

² *Sayings*, 46, 54.

³ *Sayings*, 55.

⁴ *Sayings*, 54, 55.

⁵ *Sayings*, 47.

⁶ *Sayings*, 48.

⁷ *Sayings*, 51.

⁸ *Sayings*, 52.

The Prophet would go up to any distressed animal, and stroke him, and would enjoin upon their masters kindness against oppression and fatigue.¹

Mohammed taught that men would be specially judged on the day of judgment with regard to their character to their dumb and humble servitors.²

FAITH CHALLENGES ANIMAL FOOD.

And here I should add that in killing any animal for food, while others mentioned the names of their gods, the Muslim is only allowed to say, 'In the name of God,' and is not allowed to add the attributes of mercy and compassion otherwise so inalienably joined in the sentence for general purposes. It points to the consciousness in Islam of the un-merciful and un-compassionate attribute in man which only leads him to sacrifice the life of a being which is, in the sight of God, 'a being' like himself,³ in order to satisfy his animal appetite. It drives the Muslim to see his ridiculous position as a believer in the merciful and compassionate Lord of all creatures, and yet feasting upon the destruction of a life!⁴

REGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE.

Regarding human life, the Koran teaches :
"Whoso kills a being, unless it be for another being, or for evil-doing in the land, it is as though he killed

¹ *Sayings*, 53.

² *Sayings*, 42-48, 50-55.

³ Koran, S. vi. 38.

⁴ From my *Selections from the Koran*, p. 19. Allahabad 1910.

all mankind, and whoso saves one, it is as though he saved all mankind.”¹

“The faithful believer continues to be in the full liberty of action by virtue of his religion, so long as he does not descend to shed blood which is forbidden.”²

“The first thing that will be decided between men on the day of resurrection will be bloodshedding.”³

“Of all men, the people who have faith abstain most from killing.”⁴

“All proceedings of a meeting are a trust except three: the shedding of blood which is forbidden, or sexual connexion which is forbidden, or seizing another man’s substance without right.”⁵

SACRIFICES.

The so-called sacrifice on the Day of Pilgrimage at Mecca is but a continuation of the old Arab custom observed in commemoration of Abraham’s offer to sacrifice his son in pursuance of a supposed behest in a dream referred to in Genesis xxii. 1-13. But there is nothing of the idea of sacrifice in it, nothing of the old-world Vedic, Jewish or Christian conception of the remission of sins. I quote from the Koran the story of Abraham’s sacrifice as given by Mohammed :

¹ Koran, S. v. 35, 36.

³ *Sayings*, 618.

² *Sayings*, 608.

⁴ *Sayings*, 994.

⁵ *Sayings*, 972.

“(Abraham) said, My Lord, grant me a healthy issue; and WE gave him the glad tidings of a son he should have, a meek youth. Afterwards, when he had attained to the age to work with him, Abraham said to him, O my child, I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice thee ; look then what it is that thou seest I should do. He said, O my father, do what thou art bidden : thou shalt find me, if God please, to be of the steadfast. And when they had striven with each other (to fulfil the Divine behest), and Abraham had laid himself down upon his forehead (to thank God for the meek youth who so humbly submitted to what his father bade him), WE called out to him, saying, O Abraham, now hast thou verified the vision (and thou need do no more).

“Verily, thus WE recompense the well-doers ; verily, this was a manifest trial, and WE ransomed the son by a grand victim (the piety of Abraham’s heart) ; and WE left for Abraham among posterity the salutation, Peace be upon Abraham ! Thus WE recompense the well-doers ; verily he was one of Our faithful workers.”¹

The reader will not have failed to observe the difference in Mohammed’s version of the ancient Hebrew legend, and the divesting it of everything miraculous fastened upon it by later fictions. In fact, by the thoroughly moral tone imparted to the whole story, Mohammed at once did away with the doctrine of all sacrifice, human and other, hitherto

¹ Koran, S. xxxvii. 98-111.

implicitly believed in and acted on by ignorant religionists to appease their angry God. "By no means does their flesh reach to God, nor yet their blood, but piety from you reaches to Him."¹

The character of a God-fearing devotee is thus illustrated in the Koran :

"And recite to them the story of the two sons of Man with truth : when they offered an offering, and it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other. The (latter) said, I will surely kill thee ; the (other) said, God only accepts from those who fear (to do wrong). If thou stretch forth against me thine hand to kill me, I will not stretch forth against thee my hand to kill thee ; verily I fear God, the Lord of all the world. I would rather that thou shouldst return with thy sin against me along with thy (other) sins."²

Vows.

"Vows do neither accelerate a thing, nor keep it back."³

"There is no vow in sinful things."⁴

"There is no fulfilling a vow which is sinful."⁵

"A man who was in distress had vowed that if he reached safely a place on his camel he would sacrifice him. The prophet said, Thou hast recompensed his services very badly ; and forbade him to do it."

¹ Koran, S. xxii. 38.

³ *Sayings*, 982.

² S. v. 30-32.

⁴ *Sayings*, 984.

⁵ *Sayings*, 985.

JUST WARFARE.

The principle of war is also inculcated in Islam, but it is not, as is generally supposed, directed against *all* non-Moslems because they are non-Moslems, but it is a struggle for principle and in self-defence. Speaking on the subject, the Koran says :—

“What ! will ye not fight against a people . . . who begin the fight with you themselves ?¹ And what ails you that ye fight not in the way of God, and for the weak among men, women, and children, who say, Our Lord ! bring us forth from this city of oppressive people, and give us from before Thee a patron, and give us from before Thee a helper.”²

“Permission is given to those who are fought against [to fight], for that they have been wronged.”³

THE RULE.

The following is the rule of an Islamic warfare :
“Fight in the way of God with those who fight with you, but transgress not ; verily God loves not the transgressors. . . . But if they desist, then let there be no hostility, except against the wrongdoers.”⁴

THE INTERPRETATION.

Lest the above might be misconstrued, I quote the following :—

¹ Koran, S. ix. 13.

³ S. xxii. 40.

² S. iv. 77.

⁴ S. ii. 186-9.

“As to those who have not fought against you for religion, nor turned you out of your homes, God does not forbid you to be good to them and to act justly towards them; surely God loves the just. God only forbids you to make friends of those who have fought against you for religion, and have turned you out of your homes, and have assisted each other in your expulsion: and whoso makes friends of them, these are the unjust.”¹

RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

Above all, the greatest religious toleration has been inculcated by the Prophet of Islam:—

“Say thou, O ye who believe not! I worship not what ye worship, and ye worship not what I worship, nor will I worship what ye worship, nor will ye worship what I worship—ye have your religion, and I have my religion.”²

“Abuse not those whom they call on beside God, for then they may abuse God despitefully without knowledge.”³

“Let there be no compulsion in religion; the right way is in itself distinct from the wrong.”⁴

“And if thy Lord pleased, surely those who are in the earth would believe, all of them. Wilt thou then compel men, so that they may believe?”⁵

¹ Koran, S. lx. 8, 9.

³ S. vi. 108.

² S. cix.

⁴ S. ii. 257.

⁵ S. x. 99.

Nor is there any severity in the Islam of Mohammed against the apostates. I quote from the Koran: "O ye who believe, whoso of you apostatizes from his religion, God will surely bring [in his place] a people whom He will love and who will love Him: lowly to the faithful, lofty against the ungodly; who will strive in the cause of God and not fear the obloquy of the detractor. That is the grace of God. He gives it to whom He pleases, and God is Vast, Knowing."¹

THE JIZYA.

And here I should add a few words about Jizya, as it may seem to militate with the spirit of toleration. It is too well-known that Jizya was a poll-tax levied by Naushirwan the Just, of Persia, upon such of his subjects as were exempt from military service. Mohammed levied it upon all able-bodied non-Moslems of military age who would live under the protection of Islam, in lieu of military service, exempting the females and children, the poor, the slaves, the priests, monks, and the hermits. The amount, moreover, was merely nominal, one dinar per year (according to Imam Shafii) equivalent in value to about half a sovereign, or about 5 to 6-7 rupees. As against this, in addition to compulsory military service, the Moslems paid 2½ per cent. as Zakat on their annual income.

¹ Koran, S. v. 59.

OBSCURANTISM COMBATED.

Ignorance has no place in Islam. "To acquire knowledge is binding upon all Moslems, men and women."

"Seek knowledge even if it be in China."

"The most beneficent among men is he who acquires knowledge and spreads it abroad."²

"When a man dies, all his works stop except knowledge by which others profit."³

"Verily, what reaches the faithful believer of his works and his good actions, after his death, is the knowledge which he acquired and spread abroad, a righteous issue which he has left behind him, or book which he has given to inherit. . . ."⁴

"Those who learn wisdom and knowledge, and teach the ignorant, they are superior to me worshippers."⁵

"No present or gift of a parent, out of all presents and gifts to a child, is superior to a good liberal education."⁶

"Verily, God Almighty, and His angels, and those who are in the heavens, even the ants in their holes, and the fishes in their waters, bless the good teachers of mankind."⁷

¹ *Sayings*, 424.

² *Sayings*, 414.

³ *Sayings*, 149.

⁴ *Sayings*, 150.

⁵ *Sayings*, 415. Cf. 416.

⁶ *Sayings*, 189.

⁷ *Sayings*, 417.

“ Verily, the angels spread out their wings out of pleasure for the seeker after knowledge ; and verily those who are in the heavens and the earth, and fishes also in the midst of water, all pray for his safe-conduct ; and verily the excellence of a learned man over a mere worshipper is as the excellence of the full moon over the stars. And verily the learned men are the inheritors of the prophets ; for verily the prophets’ heritage is not dinars, nor dirhams, but the heritage of knowledge : whoso then receives this, he has received ample good fortune.”¹

“ The word of wisdom is a stray (thing) of the wise so wherever he may find it, it is his by right.”²

“ Superiority in knowledge is better than superiority in worship.”³

“ Only the learned among His worshippers know (or, truly fear) God.”⁴

“ . . . Thy Lord is the Most Beneficent, Who taught the (use of) Pen, taught man what (otherwise) he would not know.”⁵

“ A man who understands religion is harder on satan than a thousand worshippers.”⁶

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

I find I have to add a few words more to say that

¹ *Sayings*, 418.

² *Sayings*, 426.

³ *Sayings*, 430.

⁴ Koran, S. xxv. 25.

⁵ S. xcvi. 3-5.

⁶ *Sayings*, 421.

there is no eternal law as regards human actions, that the Divine ordinances which regulate the conduct of men are the results of growth and development, and that the whole world is in a process of evolution.

Mohammed's teaching on the subject is outspoken enough: "For every prophet's dispensation (*naba*), there is a fixed time."¹ "No prophet's following (*ummat*) can forestall their fixed term or put it off; afterwards [when the term is come], God sends His apostles one after another; but so oft as their apostle comes to a people, they call him a liar. . . ."² "For a fixed term [only] is there a book [*kitab*, code]: [and then] God blots out [thereof] what He pleases, or confirms [by subsequent revelations]; and with Him is the Original Book."³

"And for every prophet's following (*ummat*) there is a fixed term; and when their term is come, they shall not put it off an hour, nor shall they forestall [it]. O children of Man! whenever, [therefore], any apostles come to you from among you, relating to you My injunctions, whoso then shall fear [to do wrong] and shall act aright, there shall [come] no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve. But those who shall treat Our injunctions as lies, and shall disdainfully reject them,—these shall be the fellows of the fire: they shall remain therein for ages."⁴

Even in the Koran, Mohammed's advent is said to have happened during "the *interval* of apostles"

¹ Koran, S. vi. 66.

³ S. xiii. 38, 39.

² S. xxiii. 45, 46.

⁴ S. vii. 32-4.

(*'ala fatratim mina'r-rusul*)¹: there have been apostles before him and there will be apostles after him. It should also be noted that Mohammed is called, in the Koran, Khatama'n-nabiyyin (a Seal of the Prophets), duly verified by them, and accredited as their own; and *not* Khatima'n-nabiyyin (the last of the prophets).²

Mohammed's commands and aphorisms therefore which have been called forth by the passing exigencies of the day, or related to the circumstances and requirements of a primitive and archaic society, will have to be differentiated from what is permanent and general (such as I have only noticed here), and what was temporary. "Ye are in an age," said Mohammed, "in which if ye abandon one-tenth of what is now ordered ye will be ruined. After this, a time will come when he who will observe one-tenth of what is now ordered will be saved."³

¹ Koran, S. v. 22.

² S. xxxiii. 40. See my *Garibu'l-Qur'an*, § Khatama. Hyderabad (Dn.), 1947.

³ *Sayings*, 794.